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Darwin's Pangenesis and molecular medicine

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Abstract

Based on Hippocrates' pangenetic idea, Darwin elaborated his Pangenesis hypothesis to explain a host of phenomena including inherited diseases. The conventional wisdom is that Pangenesis is wrong because it explains the inheritance of acquired characteristics and no evidence was found to support his hypothetical gemmules - molecular carriers of hereditary characteristics. Now, growing evidence for the inheritance of acquired characteristics accumulates and the discovery of circulating nucleic acids provides evidence for the chemical existence of Darwin's gemmules, and a new understanding of Pangenesis brings a broader perspective on molecular medicine.

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